

During July and August 2007, heavy monsoon rains, lasting more than three weeks, caused considerable damage and human suffering in Nepal. Flooding and landslides affected 50 of the 75 districts in the country, with more than 600,000 lives disrupted. Recognizing the severity of the 2007 floods, USAID initiated a 24-month long Nepal Flood Recovery Program (NFRP), primarily targeting residents of the six most-affected districts in the Terai.



Implemented by Fintrac Inc., the first activity under the project involved constructing a 475 meter-long riverbank protection wall at Kan-tipur, a village community in Birgunj district. This would protect over 275 households from further flooding and erosion. Using local labor for the construction, more than 1,200 person-days of temporary employment were generated in the community.

Bishwo Nath Sah, an 84 year old beneficiary and chief of the village shared, “Last year, 13 hectares of fertile land and almost 20 houses were swept away by the river. Overnight the livelihood of many disappeared. Previous protection measures initiated by villagers were washed away twice and our efforts proved futile. Before this program began, we were powerless because we had no resources or skills to set up required defenses.”

Since June 2008, USAID’s program has been working with flood-affected communities and NGOs throughout the Terai to restore and improve basic community infrastructure like roads and river protection walls; provide income-generating activities; improve agricultural productivity; improve community health through sanitation and nutrition training; and encourage participation of local communities – especially youth and vulnerable populations – in development activities.

The program was officially inaugurated by Anthony S. Chan, Deputy Director of USAID/Nepal, in September 2008 at Birgunj district. During the launch event, Asha Kumari Shah, a ninth grade student from the community, remarked, “After construction of the protection walls, my family and my neighbors sleep peacefully at night without worrying about our huts, farms or cattle being washed away by the floods.”